

N O V E M B E R 2 0 2 0 2 1



**“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed”
1 Corinthians 15:51 (NKJV)**

Thought for today...

In 1819, American author Washington Irving published a short story, which many parents subsequently read to their children at bedtime. The tale concerned a lazy and listless man who, keen to tend to anyone's business but his own, wandered off one day into the mountains. Approached by a stranger toting a keg of liquor, he journeyed with the stranger until they both encountered a number of other strange characters.

Soon after, the stranger instructed the lazy man to serve his liquor to the others. Seizing the opportunity to help himself to a flagon or two when he thought that no one was looking, he soon became intoxicated and fell into a deep, deep sleep; so deep, that he did not awaken for 20 years! The man's name was Rip Van Winkle and he awoke to a very different world.



Gone was his familiar way of life; his friends were gone and apart from a few of his family members, there were no recognisable faces among the people in his village. He quickly realised that the political landscape had changed too. Why, oh why had he allowed himself to become inebriated and to sleep for so long? ...

Like me, you may have witnessed on occasion, someone who has dozed off during a church service. As amusing as this may be, now is not the time for us to be dozing. The Apostle Paul gave a stark warning to the early Church, which remains relevant for the world today. He reminds us **“... that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.”** Romans 13:11 (New King James Version).

Unlike Rip Van Winkle, we can ill afford to be intoxicated, idle, listless or asleep. Instead, we must be sober, alert and, (as Jesus told his parents in Luke 2:49) **‘be about [our] Father’s business.’** Further, we should be **‘making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.’** Ephesians 5:16 (English Standard Version).

‘So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober.’ 1 Thessalonians 5:6 (New International Version). **‘Otherwise, when He comes suddenly He might find you sleeping.’** Mark 13:36 (Christian Standard Bible).

Matthew 24:42 advises that we **‘Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.’** (New King James Version). Revelation 16:15 drives this message home by warning us that when Christ returns, His coming will be as a thief; there will be no time to shake ourselves or our neighbours awake!



Are you awake, or do you find yourself dozing off? For those of us who are awake, let us remain awake and alert. Let’s also take every opportunity to nudge those around us who may be dozing, or have fallen into a deep sleep.